



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT**

999 BROAD STREET
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT 06604
TELEPHONE (203) 576-7201
FAX (203) 576-3913

BILL FINCH
Mayor

March 18, 2011

Energy and Technology Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Room 3900, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Attn: Senator John Fonfara
Representative Vicki Nardello
Representative Laura Hoydick

Re: R.B. 6460

Dear Members of the Energy and Technology Committee:

I am writing in opposition to Raised Bill 6460, An Act Concerning Public Access Channels. The sole aim of this bill is to take away from Sound View Community Television cable television fees in the amount of \$200,000 each year. That is a very large portion of the fees collected to support community access from cable subscribers (i.e. Cablevision and AT&T U-Verse). These fees otherwise would go to support Sound View. No other third-party, nonprofit community access provider in the State faces this kind of legislative mandate.

The City of Bridgeport enjoys a very good relationship with Sound View and is in full support of it. We especially appreciate that its productions and telecasts of the Bridgeport City Council meetings can be seen by our citizens on both the Cablevision and AT&T systems. Sound View also makes them available on-demand via the internet. Other educational and nonprofit organizations based in Bridgeport also derive great value from the free TV production training and other public interest services provided by Sound View. Finally, hundreds of ordinary citizens come to Sound View's facility in downtown Bridgeport and take advantage of Sound View's excellent studio and editing facilities, and staff expertise.

As I understand the situation, R.B. 6460 would take \$200,000 each year from Sound View's approximately \$600,000 annual budget, and give it to the local cable advisory council for redistribution to some of the smaller towns. Please be advised that Bridgeport has long stopped appointing representatives to the local cable advisory council. It further has been brought to my attention that the local cable advisory council may not now even legally exist.

It is the case that the City of Bridgeport's 40,000 - plus cable television subscribers, along with Stratford's subscribers, contribute the majority of the funds in support of community access. To redistribute the support paid by Bridgeport subscribers can be seen as unfair and would negatively impact Bridgeport.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,


Bill Finch
Mayor